NEWS

McDonald's franchisee Max Cooper has flair for promotion

(Continued from page 15)
Kroc, the company's visionary, "carefully guarded the quality and image of McDonald's." In his work with the company, Cooper convinced operators at their first national meeting to contribute 1 percent of their sales to buy advertising.

Just after McDonald's went public in 1965, Cooper bought his first three units from the company, for a total of $220,000. They were existing restaurants in Birmingham that had gone bankrupt. The beauty of Birmingham, Cooper said, was that it was a wide-open market.

"They say the salesman is the easiest person to sell," he said of his attraction to becoming an operator. "We were out selling this. We began to believe our own press clippings. That's what it was. We never looked at other restaurants. As they say, we already had ketchup in our blood."

In his first five years as a franchisee, Cooper, with his partner, Al Levins, didn't make a penny. Why did he stick with it? "We believed in it; it was a great concept," Cooper explained. "McDonald's always has been. The underlying philosophy of the business, quality food served at low prices and volume giving us the ability to do that, made a lot of sense. People could fill their stomachs for very little money."

Cooper's company acquired 16 more units between 1966 and 1975. Today CLP Corp. has 41 traditional McDonald's, three in Wal-Mart stores, two in Home Depot units and one trimmed-down unit in a strip mall. Cooper declined to discuss his privately held company's sales.

He said that it made more sense to become a franchisee of an existing concept, rather than using his marketing savvy to create his own. "If I decided to go on my own and open Max's Hamburgers, I'd have to have a concept and I'd have to truly believe in this concept," he said.

"They have a success story. They've repeated it 18,000 times. I am paying them for that knowledge, and it works. Everybody's done all that groundwork for me. On opening day people will flock into *my restaurant. The minute* we open they are all at our doorstep."

Cooper's creativity within the system is evident at one of his restaurants in Birmingham. It boasts a comedy and movie theme, complete with a tiled floor made to look like a yellow brick road and walls decorated with publicity shots of famous comedy teams. The women's bathroom is outfitted with hand-painted French porcelain sinks and gold faucets — just the kind of touch Cooper enjoys.

"You're always challenged to come up with something different," Cooper said. "I have an opportunity to be both a businessman and to get my creative juices flowing."

Cooper, a man who isn't attracted to the outward trappings of wealth, is a theater fan, a food lover and a champion of education. He *has been a major supporter* of the Ronald McDonald House in Birmingham. With his wife of 46 years, Lorayne, whom he met at a dance, he is deeply committed to education. Cooper funds a college scholarship program for employees and believes there are bright futures to be had in the fast-food business. "I resent hearing people say that all their kids can do is get a job in a fast-food restaurant," he said.

DIRECTV
NBA LEAGUE PASS
NFL SUNDAY TICKET
COMMERCIAL CHOICE
And you thought your menu was extensive.
When it comes to entertainment, DIRECTV delivers.
We're talking the sports your customers crave. It's the only mini-dish system that can give you NFL SUNDAY TICKET,℠ and other season packages from the NBA, NHL and Major League Baseball.® Plus extensive NCAA coverage. You'll also get popular cable channels, like CNN, ESPN and TNT, and 35 digital quality music channels. All delivering through a tiny 18" DSS® satellite dish. So if you want to give your customers the entertainment they hunger for, serve up DIRECTV.
For more information call 1-800-226-4DTV.
DIRECTV
SATELLITE TV AT ITS BEST
Circle 098 on Reader Service Card

Rubio's completes *private placement* to fund expansion

SAN DIEGO — Rubio's Restaurants Inc. has completed a $44 million private placement with San Francisco-based Rosewood Capital L.P. to help fund expansion in the Southern California market.

Rubio's, a 29-unit family-operated private chain, specializing in Baja cuisine, said it expects to expand to 140 units by 2000. Annual sales now reach about $15 million.

Rubio's was founded in 1983.

Rosewood is an investment and fund manager specializing in servicing foundations, universities and family-owned businesses. In 1995, after it invested $3 million in Rubio's, Rosewood principal Kyle Anderson was *named to the restaurant company's* Board of Directors.

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/tywp0003
2061038288